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CHAPTER 9

CHRISTIAN NUBIA*

INTRODUCTION

With the coming of Christianity during the period following the fourth century AD, the history of Nubia enters a new stage. The ending of the Meroitic state described in chapter 4 did not result in any substantial cultural changes. Though fashions in material objects changed slowly – these changes being shown most clearly in the pottery – the general life of the country, the styles of buildings and the nature of the agricultural village life remained substantially the same. The evidence for this is now considerable and, as a result of the extensive archaeological work undertaken in face of the threat of inundation from the High Dam at Aswan, there is a very great deal of material from which the life of the time can be reconstructed.

It should be borne in mind that this great increase in knowledge is confined to the area between the First and Second Cataracts and that, in spite of some new investigations, little more is known about areas further south than was known forty or fifty years ago, and, for the period under consideration, many important regions still lack more than the most superficial investigation.

In the northern regions, and – it can be assumed – further south also, life went on after the end of centralized Meroitic rule in much the same way. The basis of life was the cultivation of the river banks by the use of the *sagia* wheel, and the villages of late Meroitic times continued to be inhabited in the fifth and sixth centuries much as they had been from the time of the repopulation of Lower Nubia early in the Christian era. Material objects changed their styles under the mysterious dictates of fashion, largely influenced from the north, but the general continuity and stability of Nile Valley life continued without major upheavals. Even if there were incursions by Nobatae or Blemmyes, and even if rulers, such as those buried at Ballana, may have been of foreign origin, the basic population and way of life continued unchanged.

What did alter was the religion, and with the coming of Christianity

* The time scope of this chapter has been extended beyond the closing date of the volume so as to encompass the whole period of Christianity in Nubia up to its demise about the fourteenth century. [Ed.]

INTRODUCTION

changes were set in train which, giving a somewhat different flavour to the culture, persisted for many hundreds of years. In spite of continuities in material culture, the coming of the new religion marked a change which distinguished it from earlier and later periods so that Sudanese history of this time, often defined as that of 'Christian Nubia' or 'Medieval Nubia', can be studied and described on its own, even though the general pattern of life remained the same, as it has done in some areas until recent times.

The beginnings of Christianity in Nubia and the changes it produced are not very clearly understood. The conventional date for the first christianization of c. AD 540 is too precise, and, although it may represent the date at which a ruling group adopted the new religion, there is now some evidence for the small-scale penetration of Christianity for some time before this. Christianity had become an important element in the life of Egypt by the second century AD, and as a focus for national aspirations, the Coptic Church, which, in defence of its own theological position, Monophysitism (the doctrine of the single nature of Christ, declared heretical at the Council of Chalcedon in 451), had broken away from the main tendency of the Orthodox, or Melkite, Church of Byzantium. By becoming identified with Egyptian nationalism and as hostile to Byzantine rule, the Church in Egypt maintained an independent and determined position with its own patriarch and ordained priesthood, a position which has lasted to the present day.

The strong influence of Christianity in Egypt is likely to have been felt in Nubia and, though the First Cataract marked a political, religious and linguistic frontier as it had done since pharaonic times, it was not impassable. In earlier times Egyptians, Greeks and even Romans had travelled through the Dodekaschoenus (see chapter 4) and some had reached as far south as Meroe. Objects with Christian emblems have been found in graves of the fourth and fifth centuries and, though in no way conclusive proof of the religion of their owners, they show that such emblems were current and suggest that Christians had to some extent moved into the area.

As a result of this christianization (which will be examined in detail below), the fact of the existence of a Christian Church and a Christian ruler became the dominant feature of Nubian history and culture for about 800 years – from the first formal missionary activity in the mid sixth century until the taking of power by a Muslim ruler in the mid fourteenth. Christian buildings, Christian symbols and Christian belief formed the characteristic culture of the period.

The history of this Christian period is known in somewhat greater detail than that of earlier periods in the Sudan. There are written sources of a variety of kinds, and a very generalized story of the main political events can be told. The main sources have been known for many years, and many of them were published and translated by Quatremère in the early nineteenth century.¹ They are in the main writings in Arabic by Muslim historians and geographers, though there are also a few by Christian writers. Indigenous writings, almost exclusively theological in nature, add little to our historical knowledge, and the evidence derived from the archaeological activities of the 1960s, though providing much valuable information on the material side of Nubian life, has, with few exceptions, added nothing to our knowledge of historical events. The exception is the information derived from the Polish excavation at Faras from 1961 to 1964, which, in addition to providing material of the greatest importance for the study of Nubian art and architecture, has also provided additional information for the chronology of Nubian kings and for the history of the bishopric of Faras. More recent discoveries at Qasr Ibrim (still largely unpublished) are adding further details.

The writers who have provided information for the history of Nubia in the Middle Ages have been listed and their information summarized in convenient form by Vantini,² and also by Yūsuf Fadl Hasan (who is rather better for the Arabic sources).³ Of these writers, the most important for historical purposes are John the Deacon (c. 770), who in his 'Life of the Patriarch Michael', which was used by Severus (Sāwīrūs b. al-Muqaffa') for his lives of the patriarchs, gives details of a number of eighth-century kings; al-Balādhurī (c. 890), who describes the early Arab attacks, drawing on other writers, as is often the case with medieval Arab compilers; al-Tabarī (839-923), who describes conflicts between Arabs and the Beja, the inhabitants of the territory to the east of the Nile as far as the Red Sea; Abū Šālih, the Armenian; Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406); and al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442). There are a number of references to Nubia in the works of other medieval Arab writers, but they add little more to our knowledge. What is known of Nubian history rests almost entirely on the testimony of those writers listed above and, from lack of additional information and, in most cases, of

¹ E. M. Quatremère, *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte et sur quelques contrées voisines* (Paris, 1811).

² G. Vantini, *The excavations at Faras - a contribution to the history of Christian Nubia* (Bologna, 1970), 41-119.

³ Yūsuf Fadl Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1973), 182-202.

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modern editions of the writers, the standard history of Nubia by Monneret de Villard stands as the main authority,¹ and, as already indicated, there is little new to add. Any outline of the historical facts, deriving from the accounts by Arab writers, which contain contradictory and sometimes obviously wrong information, must lean very heavily on Monneret de Villard. But some of his hypotheses can now be discarded, and a much fuller account of Nubian cultural achievements can be given.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY IN NUBIA

Although the accepted date for the first Christian missionary activity in Nubia is AD 543 there is, as already mentioned, some evidence for an earlier entry of Christianity. It has been suggested that the inscription of Silko shows him to have been Christian, but a reference to 'god' does not seem to be sufficient evidence to deduce that he meant the Christian God, any more than the presence of objects bearing Christian symbols in X-Group graves gives certain evidence of the religion of those buried in them. It is worth noting that, though on the island site of Meinarti pottery lamps have been found with designs of crosses on them from the period 500-50, there was no church there until after 600.

It has been argued that there is evidence for Christians residing at Faras as early as 400,² and the Polish expedition found what they claim with some probability were the remains of a mud brick church on a stone foundation below the ruins of a pagan palace. This building is considered by the excavators to date from about the middle of the fifth century, and thus to antedate the arrival of the first official Christian mission by about one hundred years. The remains of the church, which was on a very slightly different alignment from the great cathedral which was later built above it, are very fragmentary, and most of the plan as published is hypothetical. But the apse is clear enough, and, however surprising, the presence of a church at this early date may be accepted. The walls of the church as found stood to a uniform height of about 75 cm, and this gives the impression that the church was not overthrown, but that it was deliberately reduced to a regular height. It was then filled with rubble consisting of broken brick, Nile mud, and sherds of pottery of the earliest Christian style and some of X-Group times. All this suggests that an attempt was made to construct

¹ U. Monneret de Villard, *Storia della Nubia Cristiana* (Rome, 1938), note 6.

² K. Michalowski, *Faras - Die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand* (Zurich, 1967), 48-9.

a platform on which to build what has been interpreted as a palace of an X-Group ruler (c. 500). It contained no objects to suggest Christianity, but a number of finds show late Meroitic and X-Group styles. If the archaeological evidence has been understood aright, this suggests that a premature Christian community existed at Faras before 500, built its church, and was then either suppressed or became too weak to maintain a church any longer. The palace, thought to be that of the local ruler, the viceroy of late Meroitic times, or an independent X-Group leader, perhaps one of those buried at nearby Ballana, was destroyed early in the seventh century, and it has been suggested that this was due to attack by the Sassanians who occupied Egypt for a few years from 616.¹ Although there is no direct evidence that the Sassanians entered Nubia, it is known that they reached the First Cataract, and they could well have gone further.

The formal introduction of Christianity and the conversion of the rulers, apparently soon followed by that of the greater part of the population, came in the middle of the sixth century with the arrival in 543 of missionaries from Byzantium. By this date, the important centre of Isis-worship in the temple at Philae had been terminated by imperial decree, and the influence of pagan cults at the gateway to Nubia much weakened. Not only the written sources, but also the archaeological evidence for a change from pagan to Christian burial customs, show that the last half of the sixth century saw a rapid adoption of Christianity not only by the rulers but also by the mass of the people.

An inscription in the Temple of Dendur probably gives the name of the Nubian king at the time of the mission. This inscription, in Coptic, describes the turning of the pagan temple into a church on 22 January in either the year 559 or 574, by the writer, the priest Abraham. It gives the name of the reigning king, Eirpanome, and says that Abraham received the cross – whose setting up in the temple the inscription describes – from Bishop Theodoros of Philae. This was presumably the same as the Bishop Theodoros associated with Julian in the first Monophysite mission to Nubia. The Dendur text is also interesting as providing names and titles of officials of the kingdom, of whom the most important was Joseph, the exarch (presumably governor) of Talmis. Another inscription of about the same time, describing the foundation of a fort at Ikhmindî, gives the name of another king, Tokiltoeton, and again Joseph, exarch of Talmis, is mentioned. The dating is not sufficiently without ambiguity to make it clear which

¹ K. Michalowski, *Faras – Centre artistique de la Nubie Chrétienne* (Leiden, 1966), 9.

king came first, nor is there any evidence for a relationship between them.

There are accounts of two separate Christian missions, one of orthodox (Melkite) beliefs, said to have been encouraged by the emperor Justinian, and the other Monophysite (Jacobite), sent under the patronage of his wife, Theodora, well known to have been a supporter of the Monophysite tendency. The most fully documented is the Monophysite mission, known from the partisan account by John of Ephesus.¹ The story, written in Syriac, has been told a number of times,² but may be briefly summarized here.

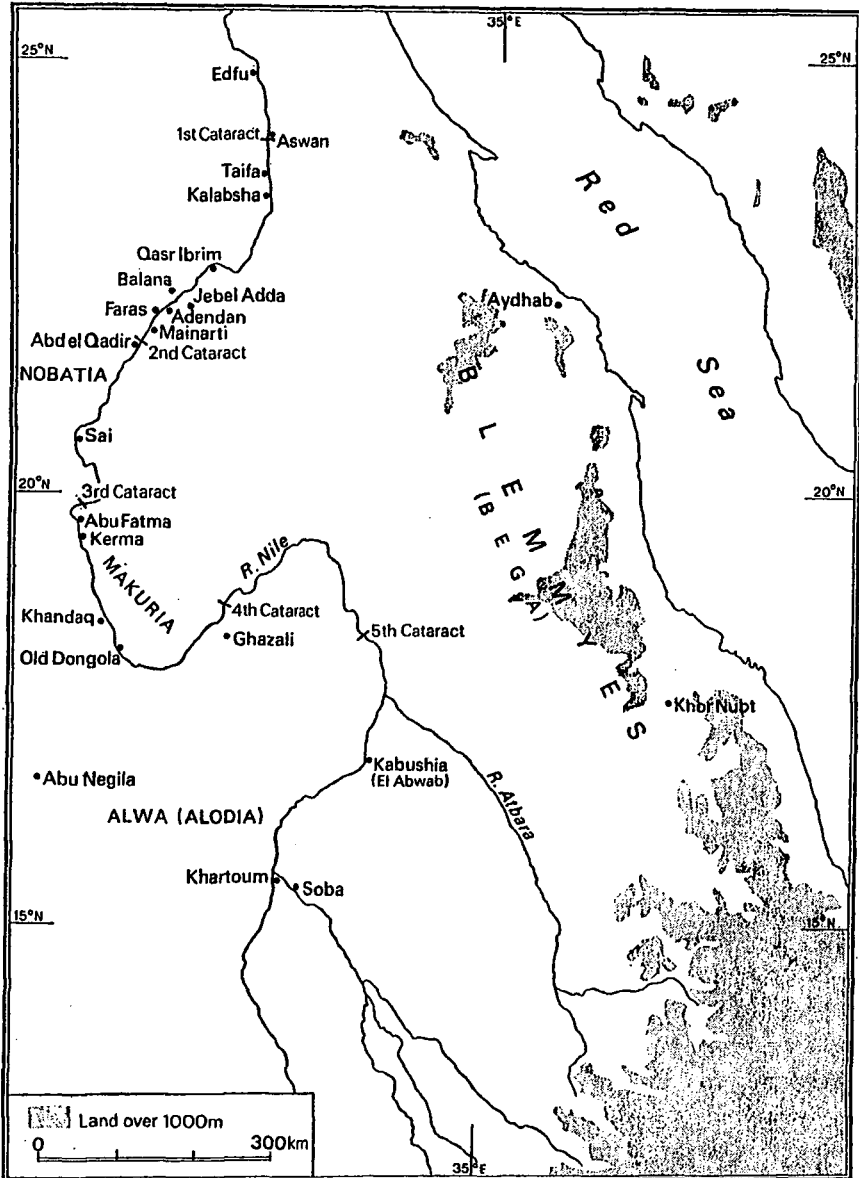
Encouraged by Theodora, Julian, a Monophysite, proceeded to Nubia in 543, whilst the rival Melkite mission was detained, by Theodora's intrigues, in Upper Egypt, where the empress persuaded or ordered the governor of the Thebaid to prevent their passage. Egypt at this time, though still under Byzantine rule, was predominantly Monophysite in allegiance, and attempts to circumvent imperial orders would have been welcome to the nationalist population of Egypt. Arriving in Nubia, Julian seems to have been well received, and his preaching was welcomed. On his return, two years later, to Byzantium, his work was continued by Theodoros, the Bishop of Philae. If the account is right, the latter spent some six years away from his see, and then, after a period when no named missionary is known to us, Longinus, also from Byzantium, arrived in Nubia c. 569, and remained, presumably at Faras, until 575, when he returned to Egypt. In 578 he returned once more to Nubia, and two years later went much further south, at the invitation of the king of 'Alwa (Soba) to take the Christian message to that country. The details of the journey are interesting, since John of Ephesus describes how the hostility of the state of Makuria forced Longinus to abandon the river route and strike out far to the east, where, by the help of the Blemmyes, he was enabled to avoid the attempts of the Makurian king to stop him. Thus he arrived safely at 'Alwa, where it is said the king was baptized after a few days, shortly to be followed by his people. Longinus was not the first Christian to arrive in 'Alwa, since he found there members of the heretical sect of Halicarnassus, who would have come from Ethiopia.

This account, with its suggestion that the Monophysite missionaries were everywhere successful, needs to be viewed with some scepticism,

¹ *Ecclesiastical history of John of Ephesus*, trans. by R. Payne-Smith (Oxford, 1860).

² L. P. Kirwan, 'A contemporary account of the conversion of the Sudan to Christianity', *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1937, 20, 289-99.

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65 Medieval Nubia.

and an account by a supporter of the rival Melkite tendency gives a rather different description. This tells that Makuria, already noted as hostile to Longinus, had been converted to Melkite beliefs in about 570. It is likely that both these highly partisan accounts give only details

which reflect well on their own party, but together they give some picture of the Nubia of the time. It should be noted that the inscription of Eirpanome certainly suggests that the region over which he ruled was Monophysite.

These two differing accounts of the early christianization provide information concerning the existence of three separate kingdoms: Nobatia, the most northerly, presumably the kingdom of the rulers buried at Ballana, with their capital at Faras, and connected with the Nobatae; Makuria (Arabic: Maqurra), somewhere further south, but which it seems reasonable to assume was based on Old Dongola, subsequently to become the capital of a single northern Nubian state; and further south still, 'Alwa (Latin: Alodia), perhaps the real heir of Meroe, with its capital at Soba on the Blue Nile.

We know little more of these kingdoms at this time other than their names and their alleged religious persuasions. It seems clear enough that the confusion following the collapse of a centralized Meroitic administration was now largely over, and that the three states, perhaps all Nubian-speaking, were exercising some form of control over their respective areas. It is unlikely that the usually accepted neat division of dominant theological allegiance is as simple as it seems, and it is more reasonable to suppose that even if the royal houses fitted into the pattern of a Monophysite Nobatia and 'Alwa, and a Melkite Makuria, the reality was more complex.

The Nubian cultivators are unlikely to have been deeply concerned with the fine theological differences which had caused such fierce controversy in Eastern Christendom ever since the Council of Chalcedon. Their rulers may have chosen their allegiance for political reasons, or perhaps just by the chance of which missionary reached them first. It seems probable, in view of proximity to Egypt, that the Monophysite Church would tend to predominate, and the history of the see of Faras appears to bear this out. But even at Faras, as later history shows, there were periods when bishops of Melkite allegiance were appointed. The real situation is far from clear. The study of tombstones, both in Coptic and in Greek, shows that the prayers of the orthodox Melkite Church were in common use; the evidence of the iconography from the Faras paintings is inconclusive; and it does not seem that there were clear-cut liturgical and artistic differences. As in Egypt, both groups had supporters, but, though there was not the same nationalist feeling to support the Monophysite Church as there was in Egypt, and though there remained for centuries a strong Byzantine Greek influence

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in Nubia, the bulk of the evidence suggests that for most of its history Christian Nubia was predominantly Monophysite (Coptic).

Whatever the case, there is no question but that Christianity was rapidly accepted by the Nubians. The literary evidence indicates this and it is strongly supported by the archaeological evidence. This evidence, largely from cemeteries, suggests that there was a quite sudden change from the burial custom of X-Group times, when the burials were accompanied by a considerable number of grave-goods, to the Christian style, where the body was usually put in the grave without any objects. There is also the evidence from the ruined churches. The first ones were built soon after 600, while the Rivergate church at Faras, originally a pagan building, was turned into a church by the middle of the sixth century, and can be presumed to be the first church to be used officially for Christian worship by a ruler.

THE FIRST ARAB ATTACKS

During the later years of Byzantine rule in Egypt and prior to the Arab conquest, there was the short period (619-26) of Sassanian Persian occupation. Whether or not the Sassanians went further (it seems unlikely), they certainly came to the First Cataract, and hints of Sassanian influence in later Nubian art may be attributed to this early-seventh-century contact.

Soon after the invasion and successful occupation (639-41) of Egypt by the Arabs under the leadership of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, they attacked Nubia, and as early as 641, 'Uqba b. Nāfi' led a cavalry army south of the First Cataract. Al-Balādhuri gives the following account:

When the Muslims conquered Egypt, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ sent to the villages which surround it cavalry to overcome them and sent 'Uqba b. Nāfi', who was a brother of al-'Āṣ, to his mother. The cavalry entered the land of Nubia like the summer campaigns against the Greeks. The Muslims found that the Nubians fought strongly, and they met showers of arrows until the majority were wounded and returned with many wounded and blinded eyes. So the Nubians were called 'the pupil smiters'.

This description of the Nubians as skilful archers shows the continuance of a military technique first recognized by the Pharaonic Egyptians, who called the people to their south 'The Nine Bows', and perpetuated by the Meroites, from whose time there are many representations of the lion-headed war-god Apedemek holding a bow in his hand, as well as finds of bows and arrows in the tombs. No

weapons have been found from Christian times, but the documentary evidence makes it clear enough that skill in archery remained a Nubian speciality. Al-Balādhuri goes on to say, quoting from one of his sources:

I went personally to Nubia twice during the rule of 'Umar b. al-Khattab, and I saw one of them [ie, the Nubians] saying to a Muslim, 'Where would you like me to place my arrow in you', and when the Muslim replied, 'In such a place', he would not miss. They were many in shooting arrows and their arrows did not fall to the ground. One day they came out against us and formed a line; we wanted to use swords, but we were not able to, and they shot at us and put out eyes to the number of one hundred and fifty.¹

The informant goes on to say that, since there was little booty to be got, and Nubian military ability was considerable, it was thought better to make peace, but that 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ was unwilling to stop campaigning and that it was only when he was succeeded by 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd, in 645, that peace was made. Verisimilitude is added to the story of the Nubian skill in archery by the giving of the name of one of those who lost an eye in battle.

The accounts of the military activities and the treaty that brought them to an end are rather confused, but it seems that warfare broke out again in 651. Perhaps this was as al-Maqrīzī describes it, because the Nubians under King Qalidurut had broken the first peace treaty. 'Abd Allah then led a force of 5,000 into Nubia and attacked Old Dongola, the capital of Makuria and, perhaps by this date, of Nobatia also. The town was attacked and damage done to the cathedral by the use of catapults. It was probably as a result of this campaign that the more permanent peace, which lasted for several centuries, was made. The treaty which concluded the military activities has been much discussed, since it was of an unusual type.² The Nubians did not sue for peace, and although the nature of the treaty is not exactly of one between equals, there was an element of reciprocity about it. A number of Arabic writers mention the treaty and its unusual provisions, and though details vary in the different versions, by using Maqrīzī's account, which is the fullest, some description of it can be given. Although normally now known as the *baqt*, this term seems originally to have been used only for the handing over of the slaves which were the Nubian contribution to the exchange. The Arab writers discuss at some length the nature of the treaty, whose unusual features caused problems to Muslim jurists. The main problem

¹ This and the previous quotation from al-Balādhuri are the present writer's translations.

² P. Forand, 'Early Muslim relations with Nubia', *Der Islam*, 1971, 48, 111-21; and for a discussion of the meaning and significance of *baqt*, see ch. 8, p. 505.

was how to define a treaty of this kind, which was made with a country that was neither integrated into the world of Islam, *Dār al-Islām*, nor was *Dār al-harb*, the area which could be freely attacked by Muslims, and for which there was some obligation to attempt forcibly to include it in the realm of Islam. The text as given by al-Maqrizī is as follows:

Covenant from the amir 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd Abi Sarḥ to the king [*'aḡim*] of the Nubians and to all of the people of his kingdom; a covenant binding upon great and small among the Nubians from the frontier of the land of Aswan to the border of the land of 'Alwa. 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarḥ has established it for them as a guarantee and a truce to be effective among them and the Muslims of Upper Egypt who live adjacent to them, as well as other Muslims and *dhimmis*. Verily, you are communities of Nubia enjoying the guarantee of Allah and that of His Messenger Muḥammad, the Prophet; with the condition that we shall not wage war against you, nor declare war against you, nor raid you, as long as you abide by the stipulations which are in effect between us and you. [Namely,] that you may enter our territories passing through but not taking up residence in them, and we may enter yours passing through but not taking up residence in them. You are to look after the safety of any Muslim or ally [of the Muslims] who lodges in your territories or travels in them until he departs from you.

You are to return every slave of the Muslims who runs off to you, sending him back to the land of Islam. You are to return any Muslim engaged in hostilities against the other Muslims, who seeks refuge with you. You are to send him forth from your territories to the land of Islam, neither inclining to [help] him nor preventing him from [returning].

You are to look after the mosque which the Muslims have built in the courtyard of your capital, and you are not to prevent anyone from worshipping in it, nor interfere with any Muslim who goes to it and remains in its sanctuary, until he departs from it. And you are to sweep it, keep it lighted and honor it.

Each year you are to deliver 360 slaves which you will pay to the *imām* of the Muslims from the finest slaves of your country, in whom there is no defect. [They are to be] both male and female. Among them [is to be] no decrepit old man or woman or any child who has not reached puberty. You are to deliver them to the *wali* of Aswan.

It shall not be incumbent upon any Muslim to defend [you] against any enemy who attacks you or to prevent him on your behalf from doing so, from the frontier of the land of 'Alwa to the land of Aswan.

If you do harbour a slave belonging to a Muslim, or kill a Muslim or ally, or if you expose to destruction the mosque which the Muslims have built in the courtyard of your capital, or if you withhold any of the 360 slaves, this truce and guarantee which we and you have equally set down will be void, 'so that God will judge between us' – 'and He is the Best of Judges.' [Qur. x, 109.]

Incumbent upon us hereby is [observance of] the pact of God and His

agreement and His good faith, and the good faith of His Messenger Muḥammad. And incumbent on you toward us is the utmost observance of the good faith of the Messiah and that of the Disciples and of any of the people of your religion and community whom you reverence. God be the Witness of that between us.

‘Umar b. Shurābbil wrote [this] in Ramaḍān in the year thirty-one [March–April, AD 651].¹

This text is probably not the original version, which, deposited amongst the archives in Fuṣṭāṭ (Cairo), was said to have been destroyed by fire, but a compilation from a number of sources all of them dating from long after the time when the treaty was made. This version leaves out the important fact, noted by al-Balādhurī, that the giving was not only one way, and makes no reference to the food supplies, cloth and wine which were to be given in exchange by the Muslims. The place at which the exchange took place has not been identified – it was called al-Qaṣr, ‘the castle’, and was described as being a short way south of Aswan and near to the Island of Philae. As the natural, and frequently political, frontier between Egypt and Nubia, this would be entirely appropriate.

The results of this treaty were of considerable importance for Nubia. The relief from the danger of Arab invasion and the resultant peaceful conditions which lasted, with a few war-like interludes, for about five hundred years, allowed the development of a distinctive Nubian culture, which, on the edge of the Muslim world, was an unusual feature. Nubia benefited from cultural and commercial contact with Egypt, and though there was a steady, small influx of Muslims, presumably merchants, into northern Nubia over the centuries, this was not sufficient to affect native Nubian culture with its strong Byzantine and Coptic flavour. The years from 700 to 1100 show the growth and flourishing of literate civilization with a well-developed art, a stable administration and distinctive cultural traditions. Trade with Egypt during the seventh and eighth centuries is illustrated by the large number of wine amphorae, probably the products of Coptic monasteries, and perhaps traded by Copts rather than Muslims.

Apart from the mutual agreement of non-aggression implied by the *baqt*, the other factor that strengthened Nubia, both politically and culturally, was the combination of the two states of Nobatia and Makuria into one. The precise date at which this happened is not certain, but it was in the latter part of the seventh or early eighth

¹ al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā’iz wa ’l-I’tibār fī dhikr al-kbiṭa wa ’l-āṭār* [Kbiṭa], ed. by G. Wiet (Cairo, 1911), I, 323. (Eng. trans. by Forand, in ‘Early Muslim relations’, 114–15).

centuries, perhaps between AD 690 and 710, in which latter year King Merkurios of Nubia put up an inscription at Taifa, far to the north of the earlier frontier of Makuria, recording the establishment of a church. So it is reasonably assumed that by this date Makuria had either absorbed Nobatia or that there had been a mutual agreement between the two states. The process by which two separate entities became one is not known, but the frontiers and political relationships were probably rather fluid, and we are liable to get a false impression of relations between states if they are thought of in terms of modern nations with their rigidly defined boundaries. Nobatia and Makuria had an identical material culture, spoke the same language and had been under a unified Meroitic government. It is surprising that Nobatia, with considerable traditions of a measure of self-government, should be the one to lose its separate identity, but there seems no doubt that from c. 700 on Old Dongola became the residence of the king. Nobatia, however, retained an element of separateness, and as there had been a Meroitic viceroy or governor of the area, so through much of the Middle Ages, Nobatia, often known to the Egyptians as Maris (from the Coptic word used for the southern regions), had a governor, the *eparch*, whose powers are not known, but whose distinctive dress and horned head-gear are illustrated in several church frescoes.

Merkurios was described as the 'new Constantine' by the Egyptian Christian chronicler John the Deacon in his 'Life of the Patriarch [of Alexandria] Michael', which was written c. 768-70. This suggests that he played some significant part in the development of Christianity in Nubia, and one view is that his reign marked a decisive victory of the Monophysite trend. If the traditional view of a rigid division between Monophysite Nobatia and Melkite Makuria were true, this would imply the curious situation of the theology of the area taken over triumphing over that of the new ruling group. The obvious paradox of this is probably an indication that the situation is not fully understood, and that, as already suggested, the lines were not so rigidly drawn between the different groups as they were in Egypt.

The beginning of the reign of Merkurios can now be fixed, since a foundation stone of his eleventh year, dated to 707, is known from Faras. This puts his accession at 697, and is further evidence for his control of Faras; this inscription also gives the name of the eparch of Nubia, Markos, and of the fifth Bishop of Faras, Paulos - which would imply that the see was founded early in the seventh century.

Another obscurity in dating these events is that in the Arabic

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accounts of the mid-seventh-century invasion there is no mention of two kingdoms, Dongola is the only capital city referred to, and it is the aim of the invaders to reach it. This may mean that Nobatia had ceased to exist as an independent kingdom even earlier than usually supposed.

THE FLOWERING OF CHRISTIAN NUBIA, c. 750-1050

From the time of Merkurios, there is evidence for the full political and cultural development of Christian Nubia. There is some historical data to be gained from Arab writers, while the archaeological material is rich and much is now known of the material culture. At this time Nubia was at the height of its prosperity, with marked cultural and material advances. Reasons for this were in part political and in part economic. One important underlying factor may have been the comparatively stable Nile flood, at a level adequate for agriculture, but not so high as to cause damage to settlements.

Merkurios, who died presumably during the period 710-c. 730, was succeeded – on the evidence of the ‘Life of the Patriarch Michael’ – by a number of kings who may have been his relatives. His son Zakaria is said to have been more concerned with religion than with temporal power. But our authority implies that he remained the power behind the throne whilst various dynastic struggles took place: King Simon was succeeded by Abraham, who was then exiled, and then followed by Markos, who in his turn was followed by Kiriakos. Of Kiriakos we have more details. It is said that in about 745 he intervened in Egyptian affairs to demand the release of Khael, Patriarch of Alexandria (743-67), who had been imprisoned during a period of persecution of the Copts by the governor of Egypt on the orders of the Caliph Marwān II. Failure of an embassy sent to demand the patriarch’s release was followed by a Nubian invasion of Egypt, said to have reached Fustāt. However, Meinardus has recently thrown doubt on the reality of this military exploit, suggesting that the story is an invention by the author of the ‘Life of the Patriarch Michael’ arising from conflation of known Nubian invasions of Upper Egypt and the liberation of the patriarch. It also coincides with a period of Coptic uprising in the Delta.¹

At some time during the eighth or early ninth centuries, there was a marked decrease in the amount of Egyptian pottery, particularly amphorae, imported into Nubia. It is possible that the end of the

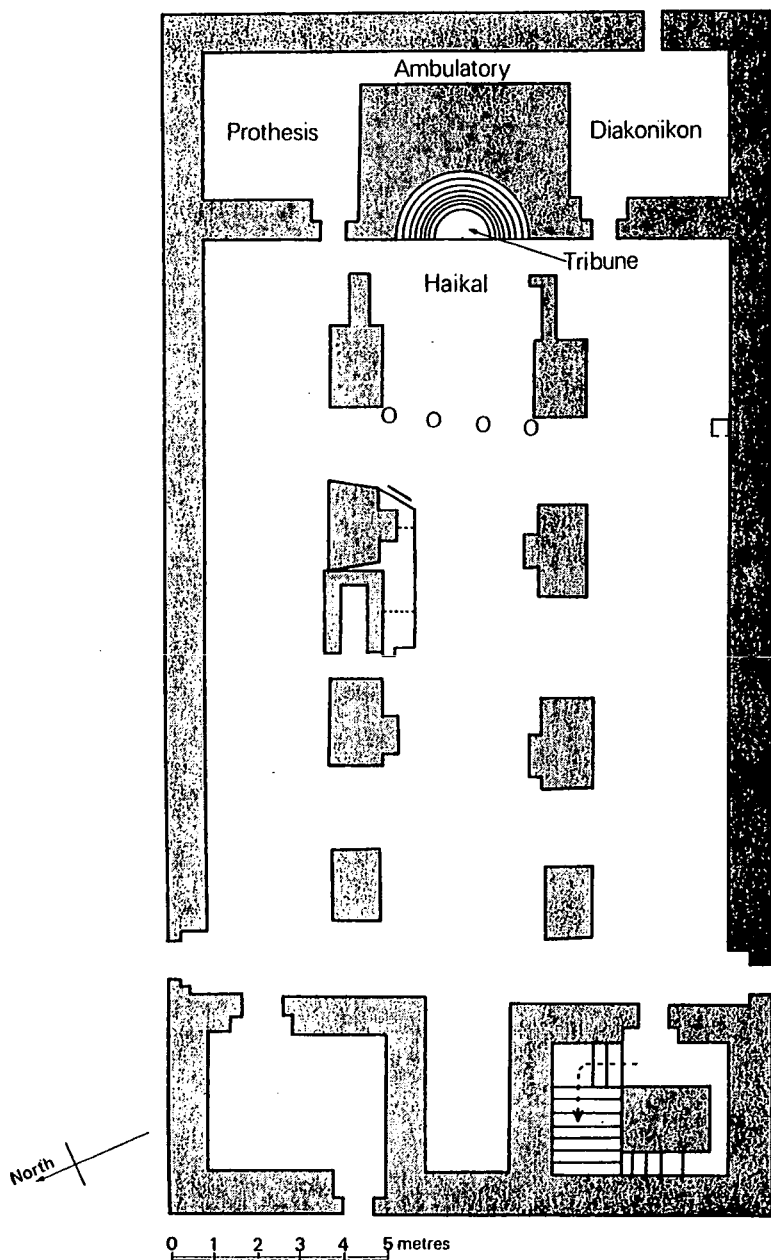
¹ Otto F. A. Meinardus, ‘The Christian kingdom of Nubia’, *Nubia-Cahiers d’Histoire Égyptienne*, 1967, 10, 147.

Umayyad caliphate of Damascus in 750 may have been the political cause of this; that by creating disruption in the Islamic world, it led to a decrease in contact between Egypt and Nubia. Certainly the coming to power of the 'Abbasids in Baghdad led to increased persecution of the Copts, which may well have exacerbated Nubian feelings. It is also possible that restrictions were placed on the Coptic monasteries of Upper Egypt, which had been the suppliers not only of the amphorae but also of the wine which they contained.

Whatever the real reasons for at least a temporary breakdown of contacts with Egypt, the results can be seen in a development of more localized pottery styles. The now well known 'Classic' Christian wares with their elaborate painted decorations, often zoomorphic, begin to appear in the latter half of the eighth century. The origins of the style are far from clear; the Nubian patterns and shapes are not easily to be confused with pottery from other areas, but there are hints of Persian and Byzantine influence. They are certainly, in spite of some coincidence of design, different from those on the pottery produced by Coptic potters in Egypt, and they never made use of glaze, which had now become common in most Islamic countries. It is also noteworthy that in the Faras cathedral there is the development of what is called the 'Violet' style of fresco painting, in which strong Byzantine elements appear. So strong is this influence, and so different from Coptic painting of the time, that work by visiting Byzantine artists has been suggested. It is perhaps relevant to note that the years 760-70 mark the height of the Iconoclastic movement in Byzantium, and it is known that artists and monks emigrated in some numbers to Italy and elsewhere, and it is therefore possible that some even reached Nubia (although passing through Islamic and Coptic Egypt would have presented difficulties).

Churches of this time show architectural changes, with the development of a typically Nubian version of the basilican style, of which the main new features were the enclosing of rooms at the western end in place of the narthex found in earlier churches, and - a unique Nubian feature - an ambulatory at the east end passing behind the tribune and joining the two small rooms (*diakonikon* on the south and *prothesis* on the north, in the vocabulary of the Orthodox Church) which lay on either side of the *halka*, or sanctuary.

Villages were larger and some, such as Debeira, Ermenna and Mainarti, can perhaps be classified as small towns. The domestic architecture shows some changes and the characteristic Nubian brick vault appears as a roofing device. The population increased, and towns



66 Plan of the church at Ghazali.

(After Shinnie and H. N. Chittick, *Ghazali - a monastery in the northern Sudan*, 1961, p. 12.)

and villages, nearly all with their churches, as well as isolated churches and a few monasteries, are found in considerable numbers from a little way south of Aswan to the Fourth Cataract. Even through the inhospitable region of the Fourth Cataract, wherever there was enough soil for cultivation, Christian pottery of this period is found. Material of similar date has also been found further upstream in the region of the Fifth Cataract, where, amongst a number of grave stones from El Koro in Coptic and Greek, one appears to be dated to 917. Further upstream there is no evidence for an extension of 'Classic' Nubian material, except for a small number of potsherds, surely imported from further north, found at Soba.

This was not only the period of the highest artistic and cultural development of Nubia; it also marked the widest extent of its cultural and, perhaps – though we know little of this – its political influence. Typical Nubian pottery of the period has been found at Fustāt in Egypt and at Khor Nubt in the Sudanese Red Sea hills; it may have been found in the west at 'Ain Fara in northern Darfur and, though perhaps slightly later in date, at Koro Toro in Tchad. The southernmost find so far has been Soba, but other pottery styles known from Soba, and dated there to the ninth and tenth centuries, have turned up further south in the Gezira not far from Wad Medani. On the evidence of written documents (archaeology has as yet nothing to say) contact with Ethiopia was slender, though one would have expected some alliance between the Christian states. 'The History of the Patriarchs' is our only source. It says that in the late seventh century, Isaac, the Alexandrian patriarch (686-9), wrote to both the kings of Nubia and Ethiopia urging them to concord. It is not clear if this is to be taken to mean that there was warfare between them. Another contact was at the end of the tenth century, when the King of Ethiopia wrote to King George of Nubia, presumably the one known to us as George II. He said that as a result of a breach between himself and the Patriarch of Alexandria, he was unable to resist pagan attacks, and he asked George to effect a reconciliation and send a canonically ordained bishop to head the Ethiopian Church.

There is no doubt that Nubia was a military power of some significance at this time and, even if the story of the capture of Fustāt is a fabrication, parts of Upper Egypt were in Nubian occupation on several occasions. In 962 the Nubians went as far as Akhmim, and southern Upper Egypt was certainly at times influenced by Nubian culture. Edfu seems to have been for a while a centre of Nubian culture, and it is

likely that the Nubian language was spoken for some distance north of the First Cataract, which is normally thought of as the language frontier.

Military activity was also carried on against the Beja of the Red Sea hills and against Arab infiltrators interested in the gold deposits there. By the middle of the ninth century, the Muslims had penetrated Nubia sufficiently to have established a mosque at Sinkat, and treaties were made in 831 and 855/6 defining Muslim rights, protecting mosques and extracting from the Beja a promise not to interfere with Muslim gold-miners. This activity reflects increasing Arab penetration of Nubia, witnessed also by the appearance of a number of Arabic tombstones in Nubia, at Mainarti and Debeira East, as well as by inscriptions on the walls of Nubian buildings at Debeira West. In addition, by the tenth century there was an Arab settlement, presumably of gold-seekers, at Khor Nubt, where a number of gravestones in Arabic have been found. Nubian influence still remained strong in the area as late as 1272, when King David of Nubia captured the important trading port of 'Aydhab.

This Nubian military activity is known only from Arabic written sources and there is no indication of weapons or armies in archaeological discoveries. If archaeology were the only available source, Nubian society would have to be described as a peaceful, agricultural one, largely obsessed by religion. A very large number of the artefacts known bear Christian symbols. There can, however, be no doubt that, from the days of the 'pupil smiters' to the capture of 'Aydhab, the military strength of the kingdom of Dongola was considerable.

This period also marked the appearance of documents written in the indigenous language, Nubian, in the form known as Old Nubian. Whatever the origins of the Nubian language (and a large area of the northern Sudan spoke a group of closely related languages of which Nubian was one), prior to the coming of Arabic as a serious and ultimately largely successful rival from the thirteenth century onwards, there is no doubt that the main language of the christianized people of the Sudanese Nile was Nubian. After the last documents in Meroitic in the early fifth century, there is a period of more than three hundred years in which no documents in an indigenous language are known. All writings – and they are not many – are in Greek (as the inscription of Silko) or Coptic (as in the case of Eirpanome). From the eighth century, documents in Old Nubian are known, the earliest dated one being a graffito of a prayer in the temple of Rameses II at Wadi es

Sebu', which is dated to the year of the Era of the Martyrs 511, the equivalent of AD 795. (Dating by the Era of the Martyrs, which refers to the persecutions by Diocletian in the year 284, is the most usual method of dating in the Nubian documents, though others were also in use.) From this time on a number of documents are known, and the number has been substantially increased by finds in the 1960s and 1970s, many of them still unpublished.

The Nubian documents, in a language ancestral to the modern Mahass dialect of river Nubian, were written in the Coptic form of the Greek alphabet with the addition of three signs for sounds in Old Nubian which did not occur in Coptic. It has been argued that these three signs are derived from Meroitic ones. If this is so, the appearance of virtual illiteracy between the time of the last known Meroitic writing and the first Old Nubian documents may be illusory, and it is possible that there was an overlap of the two languages and the two writing systems.

The presently known documents are largely religious in nature, but two written on leather deal with legal matters concerning land tenure or ownership of slaves. The large number of letters found at Qasr Ibrim will, when published, add substantially to the corpus of lay writings. None of the documents at present published adds much historical information, though some royal names are given. Two of these are of kings otherwise unknown: Eilte, recorded in one of the leather documents of private transactions; and Arron, whose name is contained in a graffito from the Abu Negila hills of northern Kordofan, which is unusual in being the only written example of Old Nubian found away from the river Nile.

Although as yet of no great directly historical value, the corpus of Nubian writing is in itself of interest from both a linguistic and a cultural point of view. It is evidence that writing, although perhaps restricted to a small group, was spread throughout Nubia, and was used not only for formal documents but also in many casual graffiti. An elaborate document, such as that known as 'The Miracle of St Menas' (British Museum Oriental MS. 6805), written in a good, clear hand with an attractive head-piece and a drawing of the saint, indicates the high level of Nubian culture.

The most spectacular witness to the cultural development is to be seen in the cathedral discovered and excavated by a Polish expedition from 1961 to 1964 at Faras. At this site, already known from earlier work to have been a major centre of Nubian civil and religious adminis-

tration, excavation discovered a large cathedral in a very good state of preservation, though roofless, and containing a large number of painted frescoes of saints, bishops and religious scenes. The cathedral was originally built in the seventh century on the site of a large building, perhaps a palace, which had been erected on top of the mud church, already described, the first Christian building on the site. The first cathedral, with a nave and two aisles, was built at some time in the seventh century; it was then renewed in 707, on the evidence of two foundation stones, one in Greek, one in Coptic, by Paulos, the fifth Bishop of Faras. Both foundation stones mention King Merkurios, and are further evidence that he was a patron of ecclesiastical building. The rebuilding of 707 was on a considerable scale, and the new cathedral was larger and more magnificent than its predecessor and consisted of a nave and four aisles. It is from this period that the splendid series of frescoes begins. Although only traces of the very earliest were found, beginning from about 750 a series of paintings covered the walls. From a study of them and from the fortunate fact that in a number of cases later paintings overlaid earlier ones, the development and chronology of the main artistic periods can be determined to be between c. 750 and the eleventh century. In addition to religious scenes, such as a magnificent painting of the nativity with several unique Nubian elements in it (pl. 38), there are also paintings of saints, bishops and a few royalties, including one particularly interesting one of 'Martha, the queen mother', which shows Martha being protected by the Virgin Mary, who holds the child Jesus in her arms (pl. 37). This painting, to be dated to the end of the eleventh century, is not only of importance as reflecting the role of the queen mother, with its significance for the inheritance system of Nubian royalty, but also gives a splendid example of royal robes, and by the representation of the queen mother's face in darker colour than that of the Virgin, shows that the Nubian artist was genuinely intending to represent one of his own people. The same dark tone is also used in representations of all those, kings and bishops, who might be assumed to be Nubians.

The Faras cathedral and surrounding buildings have also produced much other material of historical value. Foundation stones of Kings Merkurios and Zakaria III give important new chronological information; the latter, dated to 930, gives it as the tenth year of Zakaria, thus providing a date for the death of the long-lived George I in 920; other kings are represented by paintings, as are several eparchs of Nubia. Probably the most remarkable discovery of all is a list of bishops with

their lengths of reign, found painted on the wall of a chapel in the south-east corner of the cathedral. This list of twenty-seven bishops gives not only the names but the years of their episcopates, and the month and day, but not the year, of the death of several of them. From the fortunate discovery of tombstones with the exact year of death of some of the bishops, who can be identified from the list, it has been possible to restore the chronology for many of them, though damage to the inscription and difficulties of reading still leave gaps. The first fifteen names are all in the same hand, and for these bishops the day and month of death are not given. From the time of Bishop Andreas (902) various hands are found, so it is certain that the list was compiled from an earlier one, containing only partial information, either on the death of the previous bishop, Kyros, or on the accession of Andreas, but in any case in 902. It is not possible, because of gaps in the list, to date the founding of the see of Faras, but we know that Paul, the fifth bishop, held the episcopate in 707, the year in which he reconstructed the cathedral. On the basis of the average of eighteen years for each bishop whose dates are known, the first canonically recognized bishop would thus have been about the year 625. The establishment of the chronology of the bishops has also been of importance in dating the artistic styles of the paintings. In several cases bishops whose dates are known are portrayed, since it seems to have been the normal custom for a bishop to arrange for his portrait to be painted as one of his first actions after his consecration. Bishop Kyros, the last bishop in the original list, is the first Bishop of Faras to be given the title of metropolitan. This shows that at that time Faras, as well as Dongola, was a metropolitan see, and the painting of Kyros which shows him wearing as part of his ecclesiastical vestments the shawl known as *shamla* is good evidence for the Monophysite allegiance of the Church, since Melkite bishops did not wear it.

There is an enormous amount of information to be obtained from the large number of paintings, not only for the chronology of artistic styles, but also for details of ecclesiastical practice and iconography, and ecclesiastical and royal dress. There are also a number of graffiti, still largely unpublished, in the three languages current in Nubia: Old Nubian, Coptic and Greek. Many of these are just short prayers, or appeals to God for help for a named person, but there are also some longer ones. They provide much valuable information for the linguistic situation in Nubian society. This seems to have been a multi-lingual one; though there is little doubt that Old Nubian was the language of the

majority, it was not used for writing so much as the others which were perhaps considered more suitable for religious and official purposes.¹

It seems that at some time between 926 and 930 the cathedral was damaged by a fire which destroyed the roof, and twenty-five years later it was reconstructed in a different style. The original wooden roof was replaced by a barrel-vaulted mud brick one; the granite columns in the nave were replaced by brick piers; the large west door was bricked up, leaving the main access from the south; and some bishops' burials were placed outside the west wall in front of the blocked doorway. During the period of disuse of the cathedral, a new church was built to the south, and a foundation inscription shows the year to have been 930. This inscription refers to a queen mother Miriam, and also contains the first dated reference to an eparch of Nobatia. The final damage to the cathedral took place sometime around 1170, when the central dome and the nave vault collapsed or were deliberately destroyed. This destruction may be connected with military events of the time which are described below. No attempt was subsequently made to rebuild the roof of the nave, but the fallen brick was removed and screening walls built to close off the side aisles so that they could be independently used.

To return to the historical narrative, the next event of which there is an account is that of a visit to the 'Abbasid Caliph Mu'taṣim, then resident in Baghdad, by George, son of King Zakaria of Nubia, in 836. The occasion for this visit was to answer a complaint by the caliph that the Nubian part of the *baqt* had not been paid. The Nubian embassy was successful in having the *baqt* payment reduced from annual to triennial, and in the conclusion of a new treaty. The effect of this journey, and the making of the treaty by George, presumably the one who subsequently became the King George I, was to make Nubia widely known in the Near East, and it was the occasion for rejoicing by the Christian minorities of the region. These were still considerable in number, but the presence of a prince from a Christian country and his meetings with both the patriarchs of Alexandria and Baghdad caused much excitement. The story of the journey is known from several sources – there are confusions in the versions known, and one has George going only as far as Cairo at the request of Ibrahim, brother of the Caliph Ma'mūn (813-33). According to this version, the treaty was made in Cairo,

¹ P. L. Shinnie, 'Multilingualism in medieval Nubia', in Abdelgadir Mahmoud Abdulla, ed., *Studies in ancient languages of the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1974), 41-7.

George receiving special consideration from Ibrahim by being presented with houses in Giza and Fustāt, and the Patriarch of Alexandria, Joseph (831-50), was allowed to accompany him for part of his return to Nubia.

The matter is further complicated by the account of another journey by George to Baghdad, this time in 852/853, where, in company with the King of the Beja, 'Alī Bābā, the two are described as prisoners. It is not certain whether George really made the two contrasted journeys, or whether there is confusion on the part of the writers. The reference to 'Alī Bābā, King of the Beja, is an indication of further Arab interest in the Red Sea hills area, which remained an important source of gold and, therefore, a magnet for Arab adventurers. The Beja themselves had been carrying out many raids against towns in southern Egypt, including Kom Ombo, Esna and Edfu. Mutawwakil, who became caliph in 849, sent Muḥammad al-Qummi in command of a punitive expedition against them in 852, and it was as a result of this campaign that 'Alī Bābā was captured. At about the same time an independent Arab leader, al-'Umarī, not only tried to establish rights over gold-producing areas of the Eastern Desert and Red Sea hills, but also raided the Nile Valley and carried out sporadic warfare against the Nubians.

The account of this warfare gives us names of further Nubian kings and tells us something of their relationships and feuds. George I had a long reign from about 860 to 920 (as is shown by his portrait at Faras, done in old age), and he appointed his nephew, Niuty, who as the king's sister's son would have been his natural heir, to lead an army against al-'Umarī. But Niuty rebelled against his uncle, perhaps in an attempt to gain the throne before his time, and successfully opposed a son of George, who was forced to take refuge in 'Alwa. Another of George's sons, Zakaria, then made a change of policy, and at first allying himself with the Muslims, used them against Niuty. Although initially defeated, and according to the picturesque detail provided by the writer al-Maqrīzī, our main source for this story, escaping on horseback across the Nile accompanied only by two slaves, ultimately the Nubian-Muslim alliance overcame Niuty, who was killed by a trick. Zakaria then turned on al-'Umarī and successfully won over some of his Arab supporters, who were given a grant of land near to a place which may be identified with Adendan near to Faras. This land-grant is the first indication of the holding of land in any quantity by Muslims in Nubia, and marks an important stage in the penetration of Arabic-speaking Muslims into Nubia. The later events are confused; al-'Umarī

seems to have continued a warlike career in the intervals of gold-mining, and was embroiled not only with the Nubians, but also with the Beja, the indigenous inhabitants of much of the gold-producing areas, as well as with elements of his own Arab supporters. He was also in conflict with Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (868-84), the new ruler of Egypt, and in spite of initial military success was ultimately murdered, probably by agents of Ibn Ṭūlūn.

The tenth century shows a continuation of a high level of Nubian power and culture during the period which Adams has called 'Classic Nubian'. There is some evidence that there was a series of high Niles, but not such as to cause serious damage to settlements. Greater prosperity is witnessed by the development of church architecture and decoration, by an increased import of Egyptian pottery, and probably also by easy access and free movement by Arab merchants, who, on the evidence of tombstones, were now settling in the region downstream of the Second Cataract. There was continued military activity against Egypt, which after the end of the 'Abbasid caliphate in 868 was under the rule of the Tulunids and Ikshidids. In 956 the Nubians attacked Aswan and plundered it, but subsequently suffered a serious defeat and surrendered the important fortified position of Qasr Ibrim. By 962 they were attacking again and went at least as far as Akhmim in Middle Egypt; a graffito at Aswan refers to a three-year occupation by the Nubians of the towns of Esna and Armant.

There seems to have been an uneasy balance of power, for the evidence is often contradictory. Within a few years of the Nubian occupation of Upper Egypt, Jawhar, al-Mu'izz's general, is writing to the Nubian King George II (of whom, like his namesake, there is a painting in the Faras cathedral), returning to the old theme of non-payment of the *baqt*, and also attempting a conversion of the Nubians to Islam. This letter was taken by 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Sulaym al-Aswani (usually known as al-Aswani, 'the man from Aswan'), who wrote an account of Nubia which became the main source for al-Maqrīzī's description.

By 969, during the reign in Nubia of George II, the coming to power of the Fatimids in Egypt, whose rule continued until their overthrow by the Ayyubids in 1171, led to two centuries of comparative peace and good relations. The unusual situation of the Fatimids as Shi'a rulers in an area of Islam which was predominantly Sunni may have led the rulers of Egypt to emphasize some form of alliance with Nubia as a counter-weight to hostile Sunnis. It appears that the King of Nubia was

accepted as at least a semi-official protector of the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, and thus in some sense responsible for the whole Christian population of Egypt.

Nubia continued prosperous during the latter part of the tenth and eleventh centuries, though there is not a great deal of detail known. Abū Šāliḥ mentions King Raphael in 1002 as having built in red brick 'in the style of Baghdad' at Old Dongola, and says that King Solomon was buried in the monastery of St George at Khandaq, a building still unidentified. The Church continued to play an important part in the life of the country. The Faras cathedral remained in being with a wealth of paintings, and there was also the large church, also probably a cathedral, recently found at Old Dongola. There were a number of monasteries, though the only ones known by excavation are at Wizz and at Ghazali, where a dated gravestone is of 999. The persecution of the Christians in Egypt by al-Ḥākim al-Manṣūr (996–1021) led many, including monks, to flee to Nubia, and the predominance of Coptic inscriptions at Ghazali may be due to this.

The information from Faras, again the main Nubian source, apart from providing the names and dates of bishops, also suggests some variation in the allegiance of the Church. It has been argued that the three bishops who ruled the see from 997 to 1056 – Ioannes III, Marianos and Merkurios – were Melkite (orthodox), though Petros (1058–62) was Monophysite. But during this time Christodoulos, Patriarch of Alexandria, visited Nubia, surely good evidence for a close relationship between the head of the Coptic Church and his province of Nubia. The situation is far from clear, and at least one scholar doubts the evidence for a return to orthodox worship.¹

The nature of the liturgy, largely unknown, of prayers on grave-stones, both Coptic and Greek, and the varying languages in use, are not conclusive evidence, and even the appearance of a typical orthodox prayer on the Greek grave-stones is not in itself necessarily proof of control by the Melkite Church. In 1097, however, in the time of Bishop Chael III, it is reasonably certain that the Melkite rite was reintroduced, and it is noticeable that from this time there are no inscriptions in Coptic. The middle of the century shows a considerable increase in the use of Old Nubian for the writing of graffiti. The use of Greek also revived from 900–26 in the time of Bishops Kolluthos and Stephanos.

¹ M. Krause, 'Zur Kirchen und Theologiegeschichte Nubiens', in E. Dinkler, ed., *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in Christlicher Zeit* (Recklinghausen, 1970), 71–86.

Such information as we have – and it is virtually all from Arab writers, some of whom are unsympathetic and most of whom are ignorant of Nubia at first hand – shows the King of Nubia, living at Old Dongola, perhaps in the building formerly regarded as a church but now suggested to have been the palace (pl. 32), as having absolute power in secular matters, and probably with considerable powers over the Church, though not having the right to appoint bishops, whom it seems were still appointed from Alexandria.

We do not know precisely how the claim to the throne was established, nor do we know when, and if, the throne passed to different families through the long years of Christianity in Nubia. There was a tradition that the royal family was of Arabian origin, though it is difficult to see how this could be. The king had the title of *Kabil* (or *Kamil* – the reading is uncertain) and he was a priest as well as king, and had the right to celebrate the mass unless he had been responsible for killing a man. His vestments are known from paintings at Faras, and for regalia he had a throne, a parasol, a crown and a gold bracelet. In spite of this appearance of elaborate regalia, the ambassador of Tūrān-Shāh describes how, when his mission came to Dongola about the year 1175, the king rode out in extremely simple garb to meet it, and on a horse without trappings.

By some accounts succession was from father to son, but this may be a misunderstanding on the part of Arab writers who would have had difficulty in conceiving of any other system. There is certainly evidence, most of it rather late, that a quite different succession system, suspected also for Kushite times, was used. In this system, the son of the king's sister succeeded, and this was perhaps the reason for the importance of the lady known in Meroitic times as Candake (*Kandace*), if she was the king's mother. In the Nubian period, the 'king's mother' is twice depicted on the walls of the Faras cathedral. There are traces of this system still among modern Nubians, and some Arab descriptions make it quite clear that this was happening, on some occasions, at least, in the Nubian royal family. The conflict between Zakaria and Niuty, both of whom claimed the succession to George, can be explained by the existence of this succession system, and we know that Niuty based his claim on his being the son of a sister of King George. The nature of Zakaria's claim, since he was a son of George, has suggested to some that there were both patrilineal and matrilineal systems in conflict. But Kronenberg has shown that the existence of a system of matrilineal parallel cousin-marriage provides an explanation, and that Zakaria's

claim was not based on his being the son of the king, but on being the son of George's sister's daughter, that is the sister of Niuty, whom Zakaria properly addressed as his uncle, that is to say the brother of his mother.¹ It was proposed in the aftermath of Niuty's death that al-'Umari should marry his widow, who was herself sister to Zakaria – such a marriage would have ensured the succession to the son of al-'Umari. It is worth noting that Abū Ṣāliḥ refers to Baḥriya, a son of the king's sister, as being the first Nubian to be converted to Christianity.

Details of administration and the organization of the royal court are scanty, but we can assume the dominance of the king and also that he had some part in the control of the Church. There were a number of high officials of the court, of whom the eparch of Nubia, 'The Lord of the Horses' – and not apparently 'Lord of the Mountain', as the title had previously been read² – must be presumed to be the main one, though he was based at Faras with his own court and administration and did not reside with the king at Dongola. Later he appears to have moved his residence to the more easily defended town of Qasr Ibrim. The actual function of this powerful viceroy is not known in detail, but he remained as a vestige of the once independent kingdom of Nobatia. He was appointed by the king, though perhaps the title and office became hereditary in later times. He wore a distinctive dress and regalia, of which the most striking part was a two-horned head-dress. His duties included not only control of the northern and most vulnerable province; he was also charged with most of the dealings with Egypt and with foreign merchants and travellers. He also controlled access by foreigners to areas south of the Second Cataract, since by the tenth century it seems that settlement by foreigners in the area between the First and Second Cataracts was permitted and had become increasingly common – as the presence of Arabic tombstones throughout the region attests.

Of the other officials, all of lesser importance than the eparch, we know virtually nothing more than their titles. The early inscription of Eirpanome already contains some titles; one Papnute is called the *stepharis*, though the meaning of the title is obscure, and Epephanios has a title which perhaps is to be read 'Keeper of the Seal'. Later we find Byzantine titles in use: the *domestikos*, *protodomestikos*, *meizon*, *proto-meizoteros* and others. These all closely follow Byzantine usage and seem to be concerned largely with the details of running the court,

¹ A. Kronenberg, 'Parallel cousin marriage in mediaeval and modern Nubia-Part I', *Kush*, 1965, 13, 256–60.

² J. M. Plumley, 'Qasr Ibrim, 1969', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1970, 56, 14.

which may have included general administrative responsibility for the country as a whole.

The organization of the Church can be assumed to have depended on the bishoprics, at times metropolitan, of Faras and Dongola. A list of these bishoprics is known, and the following places can be identified as bishops' sees: Kalabsha, Qurta, Qasr Ibrim, Faras, Sai and Dongola and, finally, one unidentified one, Suenkur, which is likely to have lain upstream of Dongola.

The replacement in the years 1169-71 of Fatimid rule by that of the Ayyubid Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin), who, originally vizier to the last Fatimid ruler, al-Āḍid, had progressively taken over the control of Egypt, marked a change in the fortunes of Nubia. The Fatimids, with their attention to the arts and their heretical but rather liberal attitudes, had maintained for two hundred years a state of reasonable peace with Nubia, and had recruited what are described as 'black' troops, either Nubians, or people from further south whose journeys to Egypt would have been facilitated by the Nubians. In the year 1171, the Nubians attacked Aswan, perhaps in an attempt to give aid to their Fatimid allies, and during the next year advanced into Upper Egypt. This threat called forth a strong response from Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who sent his brother, Tūrān-Shāh, in command of an army which drove the Nubians back. On 2 January 1173, he captured the strongpoint of Qasr Ibrim, took many prisoners, turned the Church of St Mary into a mosque, and killed 700 pigs that were found there. Archaeology has provided considerable evidence, from an analysis of animal bones, that the Nubians kept and ate pigs in considerable quantity, and the detail adds authenticity to the story. The cross on top of the church was burnt, and the muezzin gave the call to prayer from the top of the church dome. The greater fanaticism of the new invaders is clearly shown in these activities, as also by the taking prisoner and torturing of the bishop. The place was pillaged, stocks of cotton removed and a garrison of Muslim cavalry installed there under the command of Ibrāhīm al-Kurdi. The troops made a number of incursions further south, in one of which Ibrāhīm was drowned near to Adendan, just across the river from Faras. Perhaps as a result of this, the garrison of Qasr Ibrim was withdrawn in 1175, and Christian reoccupation and restoration of the church took place.

Shortly after this, Tūrān-Shāh sent an embassy to Dongola to report on the land, perhaps with a view to deciding on whether an invasion would be profitable. It was the leader of this embassy who reported on the apparent poverty of the king already mentioned, and his description of the country as producing nothing more than a little grain and a few palm trees persuaded the Muslim leader that further military adventures would not be profitable. There seems to have been no further interference in Nubia on the part of the Ayyubids, and for the next hundred years no information is available on conditions or events in the country.

The seizure of power in Egypt by the Mamluks led to a decisive change in Egyptian relations with Nubia. The Mamluks were more aggressive than their predecessors, and reacted strongly to any disturbances along their southern frontier. An attack on Aswan in 1272 by King David of Nubia, who had already been in trouble with Sultan Baybars of Egypt for non-payment of the *baqt*, and had captured 'Aydhāb in the same year, resulted in a military victory by the Mamluks in which a number of leading Nubian personalities, including the Lord of the Horses, were captured, taken to Egypt and executed. It initiated, not only continuing military activity by the Mamluks, but also a long period of interference by them in the internal affairs of Nubia.

Taking advantage of dynastic feuds and supporting those elements who were already seeing the advantage of Muslim help in achieving their ends, the Mamluks became deeply involved in the situation in Nubia, thus helping to prepare the way for the eventual collapse of the Nubian kingdom and the decline of Christianity and its ultimate replacement by Islam. As Adams has ably shown, the archaeological evidence shows considerable changes in Nubian life and these must, in part, be due to the political and military pressures of the time.¹ The most obvious is the reduction in number, but the increase in size, of the towns and villages which in earlier centuries were so numerous throughout Nubia downstream of the Second Cataract. This, in the area lying closest to Egypt, is the most sensitive indicator of changes in Nubian life. The impression given not only by the concentration of population into fewer, and better-defended, localities, but also by the increase of late Christian communities in the remote area of the 'Belly of the Rocks', an obvious refuge area, is that people were looking for safe and defensible

¹ W. Y. Adams, 'Post-pharaonic Nubia in the light of archaeology, IIP', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1966, 52, 147-62.

places in which to live, and this coincides closely with what the few written records say about the increasingly disturbed conditions.

The historical account is full of military and political events and intrigues. The story starts with the arrival in 1275 of Shekanda, nephew of David, at the court of Baybars, to gain support for his claim to the throne against David II, who had now succeeded. If our view of the Nubian succession system is right, Shekanda would have had the legal claim, and we do not know how David II had gained the kingship. Baybars supported Shekanda and sent a force into Nubia which, after capturing the town of Daw (modern Jebel Adda), and an island, perhaps Mainarti, advanced further into Nubia. David fled, and the eparch changed sides and supported Shekanda, who became king. The Mamluks made heavy claims on Shekanda for the help they had given him, and the northern part of Nubia, that governed by the 'Lord of the Horses', was made directly subject to Egypt. In addition the *baqt* payments were enforced once more, and to them was added the requirement to hand over each year what must now properly be considered as tribute - three elephants, three giraffes and many camels and bullocks. The humiliation of Nubia was further strengthened by the destruction of a church at Dongola which King David had built with the labour of Muslims captured at Aswan and 'Aydhāb, and by the removal to Egypt of objects of gold and silver contained in it.

David had fled south to al-Abwab, presumably part of the kingdom of 'Alwa, and was surrendered by the king of that place (who was tributary to 'Alwa, unless the Arab writer misunderstood and meant the king of 'Alwa itself) to the Mamluks in 1277. In 1286 the King of al-Abwab, Ador, perhaps the same ruler, complained about Shekanda to Sultan Qalā'ūn (1279-90). As a result of intrigues of which we know nothing, Shekanda was deposed and replaced by Shemamun, who skilfully managed to retain the rule of Nubia, in spite of various Mamluk raids, until nearly the end of the thirteenth century. In the early years of the fourteenth century, the king for a short time was Amy. But he was murdered in about 1310, to be succeeded by Kudanbes, who was the last Christian king that we know to have ruled from Dongola. During this time Muslim influence was very much increased, and an inscription in the palace building at Old Dongola claims that the upper part was turned into a mosque in 1317. It is likely that some part of the Nubian population had now become Muslim. The Banū Kanz, and their leader who bore the title of Kanz al-Dawla, who lived in the northern part of Lower Nubia, seem to have become Muslim and partly

arabized, though still speaking the Kanzi dialect of Nubian as they do to this day. They seem to have played a considerable part, as allies of the Mamluks, in the attacks on the king of Old Dongola. By 1323 Kanz al-Dawla had become king, although relations between the new ruler and his former allies became strained, and the confused account suggests that the Mamluks had second thoughts about the reliability of Kanz al-Dawla as their agent in Nubia. For a time at least, they supported Kudanbes in an attempt to regain power, but by 1323 they had either lost interest or again changed their policy, and Kudanbes, who was waiting at Aswan for Mamluk military aid, found that none was forthcoming.

Although it has been known that, in spite of the growth of Muslim influence in Nubia, Christianity did not disappear suddenly in the first half of the fourteenth century, it is only recently that firm information about the later manifestations of Nubian culture and Christian religion have come to light.

The period from the reign of Kanz al-Dawla on, known largely from the writings of al-Maqrizī (1364-1442), was one of an increasingly chaotic situation, with raids and counter-raids caused to a considerable extent by the coming into Nubia of Arab tribes, originally from Arabia, who had been forced or persuaded out of Upper Egypt by the Mamluks. Kings continued to rule in Nubia, though they may in the main have been Muslims, as the name of one, Nāṣir, who came to Cairo in 1397, suggests. After 1365, the destruction of Old Dongola seems to have led the ruler to move his residence to Daw (usually identified with Jebel Adda, much further north), and here apparently was based the last remnant of the kingdom of Dongola. Although the islamized Banū Kanz controlled, in their boisterous way, the northernmost part of Nubia, the kingdom of Dotawo, which is reasonably identified with Daw (Lower Do), remained Christian and Nubian-speaking and writing. This is indicated by a few documents in Old Nubian which refer to Dotawo and give the names of kings (Eltei, Siti, Koudlaniel). A leather document, which deals with a private sale of unknown commodities, also gives the name of King Eltei; the names of officials and of witnesses to the transaction are all Nubian, several of them having the characteristic Nubian name ending of *-kuda*. The existence of kings of Dotawo has been known for many years, but it was only in recent times that new discoveries have given more precise information and shown that the kingdom lasted into the fifteenth century. One document found

at Jebel Adda dates to 1484 and gives not only the name of a king, Joel, but also that of a bishop – good evidence for the persistence of Christianity. Evidence that Qasr Ibrim had remained the seat of a bishopric into the fourteenth century at least was the discovery there of the burial of a bishop who had been consecrated in 1372. Dotawo may have preserved some kind of independence even until the coming of the Ottomans under Ozdemir Bey in the mid sixteenth century.¹

The information derived from this scanty literary tradition as well as from the archaeological evidence for very late Christian communities in more remote areas upstream of the Second Cataract, strongly suggests that Nubian cultural traditions and Christianity did not end suddenly in the middle of the fourteenth century as has been assumed, but that they continued, though perhaps harrassed, well into the fifteenth century. Certain scraps of information, though not of a very reliable kind, suggest that some Christian communities persisted very much later. There are almost no written sources for the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Nubia, but from the latter part of the seventeenth century the Franciscans made attempts to carry out missionary activities in Ethiopia, some of them travelling there along the Nile. From them came stories of the existence of Christian communities. Perhaps these represent wishful thinking, but even as late as 1742 we have a letter from a Father Giocomo Rzimarz, resident in Cairo, who reported that his Nubian servant had told him of a group of Christians on the island of Tanqussi, which is upstream from Old Dongola. In 1540, Alvares, a Portuguese missionary in Ethiopia, had reported that he had met a group of Nubian Christians come to the emperor of that country to request his help in obtaining priests. The very latest and somewhat bizarre account, of at least one Christian in what must have been otherwise an exclusively Muslim land, is contained in the account by R. S. Ensor of his visit to Old Dongola in 1870 and of his meeting there with an Ethiopian priest. There are also some slight indications of Christian influence from Nubia having penetrated to the western Sudan. The Franciscans showed considerable interest in testing the truth of the stories; they were sufficiently convinced for two brothers to have set out from Tripoli in 1710 to investigate, but the expedition failed with their death.

Events in the kingdom of 'Alwa are even more obscure than in the north. The good grazing areas within its boundaries made it more

¹ P. M. Holt, 'Sultan Selim and the Sudan', *Journal of African History*, 1967, 8, 19-23.

attractive to the groups of Juhayna and Quraysh Arabs, who were moving south, than were the barren desert lands of the north. Details are not known of the penetration of Arabs, who brought their language and religion with them. But we can suppose that it was not the sudden attack of a large number of fierce warriors, as often suggested, but rather the gradual penetration of small groups moving with their families and animals and simple household goods. In time they formed groups which began to have political aspirations, and when a leader, 'Abdullāh Jammā' – perhaps a mythical figure, since his name means 'Abdullāh the gatherer', a suitable name for an eponymous founder who had coalesced disparate groups – formed a unified 'tribe', the 'Abdullāb, they were able to face the rulers of 'Alwa with adequate force.

It has usually been assumed that Soba, the capital of 'Alwa, was captured shortly after 1504 by 'Umāra Dūnqas, ruler of the Funj, a people who appeared on the upper part of the Blue Nile, and established their capital at Sennar. Traditions, which may be part of a consciously invented political myth, claim that the Funj allied with the 'Abdullāb and brought the kingdom of 'Alwa to an end. But a recent study throws doubt on this, and suggests that the 'Abdullāb had already conquered 'Alwa before the arrival of the Funj in the area, perhaps as early as the fourteenth century, and that the Funj in their turn established control over the 'Abdullāb.¹ Whatever the exact details of the end of Christian 'Alwa, there is no doubt of the complete acceptance by the inhabitants of 'Alwa of the culture, religion and language of the conquerors. The area today is the most arabized of all parts of the Sudan. All trace of Nubian, if indeed it was the language of 'Alwa, has gone, except for a few place names, whereas in the north it has survived, and it was in the region of the Blue Nile that from the seventeenth century onwards the teachings of Islam were more strongly propagated by a group of learned men, many from other lands, than in any other part of the Sudan.

¹ P. M. Holt, 'A Sudanese historical legend: the Funj conquest of Suba', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1960, 23, 1-17.

Djaït, 'La Wilāya d'Ifrīqiya au IIe–VIIIe siècle: étude institutionnelle' (1967, 1968). The Ibadites have been studied in numerous articles by T. Lewicki; cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, under 'Ibāḍiyya', for a general description and complete list of references; also Brett, 'Ifriqiya as a market for Saharan trade, from the tenth to the twelfth century AD' (1969). For the Jews, see Hirschberg, 'The problem of the Judaized Berbers' (1963), and *A history of the Jews in North Africa*, 2nd, revised edn, trans. from the Hebrew (1974). The colonization of the Dar'a is described by Rosenberger, 'Tāmdult: cité minière et caravanière' (1970).

The basic work on architecture is Cresswell, *Early Muslim architecture*, 2nd edn (1970); an abridgement of the first edition of 1932–40 is provided by *A short account of early Muslim architecture* (1958). For the Maghrib see also Marçais, *Architecture musulmane d'Occident* (1954), and Lézine, *Architecture d'Ifrīqiya* (1966).

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The main literary sources for the history of Nubia during the Middle Ages are in Arabic and are not easily available. The most important of the Arabic writers were Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian (*fl.* 1200) (1893), and al-Maqrizī (1314–1442) (1911–27). Neither of these had first-hand knowledge of Nubia, but al-Maqrizī incorporated valuable material from an otherwise lost work by 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Sulaym al-Aswānī (*fl.* latter part of tenth century). This work is of special value because al-Aswānī travelled to Dongola as an emissary of the Fatimid ruler, Gawhar. Quatremère (1811) translates many of the relevant Arabic documents into French. Vantini (1970) provides a useful summary, with brief extracts, of all the ancient literary sources, as well as an erratic bibliography, full of mistakes. An English translation of the Arabic writers, without original texts, by the same author is due soon. Documents in the Old Nubian language, until recently very few in number and almost exclusively religious in content, are now being found in some quantity at Qasr Ibrim (Plumley, 1975), and when fully published will add to historical knowledge.

The only book length history of the area and period is by Monneret de Villard (1938). Although written long before the recent archaeological activity, only points of detail need to be changed, and it remains an essential work. Adams, *Nubia: corridor to Africa* (1977), gives a rather different version, though still based on the literary material

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used by Monneret, since it also incorporates much of the evidence from recent excavations; the historical story remains much the same but the account of the material culture is now fuller, and greater attention is paid to ecological and economic factors. Arkell (1961), for long the standard history of the ancient Sudan, has one chapter on the period 600–1500, and the title of the chapter 'The coming of Islam' shows the main theme. It seriously underrates the Nubian culture.

Apart from Arabic sources, the only other major ancient work is the *Ecclesiastical history* written in Syriac by John of Ephesus in the sixth century. This work describes the first missionary activity in Nubia, and provides, apart from rather dubious archaeological evidence, the only information for the beginning of Christianity. An English translation was published by Payne-Smith (1860) and a Latin one by Brooks (1935–6). Since John was a strong supporter of the Monophysite cause, his account is biased and must be used with caution. For a simple, straightforward and brief account of history and culture, Shinnie (1954) is useful as a beginning, though it is now out of date on the archaeological side. Shinnie (1965) draws attention to some of the new material.

The first archaeological investigations were concerned almost exclusively with the study of churches, many of which remained standing until the waters of Lake Nubia removed them. The first studies, both of high quality, are Mileham (1910) and Somers Clarke (1912); these writers visited all the sites they described, and, being architects, made useful and accurate plans. Monneret de Villard (1935–57) is a much fuller description of standing sites, but in many cases the author did not visit them and compiled his descriptions from other sources – the plans are rather rough.

During the period between the wars, there was no excavation and little first-hand investigation of archaeological sites, other than the work by Monneret de Villard (1935–7) already mentioned. There was some general writing and Crowfoot (1927), although short and unassuming, remains one of the best and most perceptive appraisals of the culture.

When the excavation started after the Second World War, the first publications were Shinnie (1955) and Shinnie and Chittick (1961). Both of these were pioneering attempts, and suffer from lack of comparative material and vagueness in the chronology. Since 1961 there have been many excavations and the literature is profuse. Many new studies and excavation reports have appeared in recent years – the most important

perhaps being the very large number of publications on Faras and its paintings. Michalowski (1962, 1965) gives an account of the excavation and some of the finds; Michalowski (1967) gives a good general account, placing Faras in its historical and artistic setting; Michalowski (1974) is a detailed catalogue of the paintings from the cathedral now in Warsaw. Michalowski's colleagues and students have produced a very large number of papers and several books. Amongst these may be noted in particular Jakobielski (1972), which gives an historical account of the bishopric of Faras based on the inscriptions and the famous painted list of bishops, all of which the author has studied at first hand, and Kubinska (1975), which studies the Greek inscriptions and graffiti. Other volumes in the Faras series are forthcoming.

Of other excavations full reports are still awaited in most cases, but attention should be drawn to Weeks (1967), which is not only a model of what an excavation report should be, but also contains an interesting chapter on general historical and economic questions. Preliminary reports on excavations in the Sudan are published in *Kush*, but the last volume published (in 1974) is dated 1967/68; however by that date most of the rescue excavations had been completed. Reports on excavations in Egypt are more scattered, but the annual surveys in the journal *Orientalia* by Leclant give brief descriptions of work carried out and excellent bibliographies. Adams in particular has dealt with specific aspects of the archaeology. His work on the pottery (Adams, 1962) has been of particular value in providing a chronological framework. The article referred to is considerably modified by Adams (1967-8) and other still unpublished works. Lister (1967) is also a valuable study of pottery, by one who is herself a potter and has a good understanding of the processes involved in making pots. Changing styles of church plan and architecture are studied, and a chronology proposed, by Adams (1965a). Other topics, except for church paintings, have not yet been the subject of special studies.

For the Old Nubian language and publication of those texts known at the date of publication, Griffith (1913) is fundamental. Zyhlarz (1928, reprinted 1966) provides a much more detailed study of the grammar, but is less clear and needs to be used with care; old Nubian grammar needs much further study, and a new work is promised by Hintze.

The Society for Nubian Studies organized conferences at Warsaw in 1972 and Chantilly in 1975, following a first conference, before the founding of the society, at Essen in 1969. The publication of the

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papers read at these conferences – Essen (Dinkler, 1970), Warsaw (Michalowski, 1975) – gives the most up-to-date information on many topics. Papers from the Chantilly conference are expected to be published in 1977.

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The references are essentially those for chapter 8, 'The Arab conquest and the expansion of Islam in North Africa'. Useful articles will be found in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st and 2nd edns, under, e.g., Abū Yazīd, Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, Fāṭimids, Ḳarmāṭiyya, Muḥammad b. Tughj. The fullest source for the Ikhshidids is Ibn Saʿīd, *Kitāb al-maghrib fi ḥulāʾi l-Maghrib*, Bk iv, ed. and trans. into German by K. L. Tallqvist (1899), which is derived from the work of the contemporary Ibn Zūlāq; Tallqvist's edition includes the relevant section of al-Kindī's work, with a translation, for comparison. A certain amount of information on the administration in this early period is to be found in Rabie, *The financial system of Egypt*, AH 564–741/AD 1169–1341 (1972).

The history of the Fatimids in the Maghrib has not yet become the subject of a monograph. The sources for the Fatimid and Zirid period down to 1062 for the most part go back to the lost chronicles of al-Raḳīq and his continuator Ibn Sharaf, variously represented in the *Bayān* of Ibn ʿIdhārī, the *Kitāb al-Kāmil* of Ibn al-Athīr, and the *Kitāb al-Ibar* of Ibn Khaldūn (for details see bibliographical essay for chapter 8). To these may be added the geographers, al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*, ed. by de Goeje, VII (1892); Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣurat al-arḍ*, ed. by Kramers (1938–9), French trans. by Kramers and Wiet, *Configuration de la terre* (1964); and al-Bakrī, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, ed. and trans. by de Slane (1911–13, reprinted 1965). The principal secondary work following upon Talbi, *L'Émirat Aglabide* (1966), is Idris, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Zīrides*, 2 vols. (1962). For the economic history of the subject, cf. Brett, 'Ifriqiya as a market for Saharan trade, from the tenth to the twelfth century AD' (1969). The account of the eleventh century is based essentially upon Brett's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 'Fitnat al-Qayrawān' (1970); cf. Brett, 'The Zughba at Tripoli, 429H (1037–8 AD)' (1974–5); 'The military interest of the battle of Ḥaydarān', in Parry and Yapp (1975); 'Sijill al-Mustanṣir' (1974). The account of the Geniza material is contained in Goitein, *A Mediterranean society*, I (1967).

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Plate 32 The 'Palace' at Old Dongola. [ch. 9]
(Photo: P. L. Shinnie.)



Plate 33 The church at Adendan. [ch. 9]
(Photo: P. L. Shinnie.)

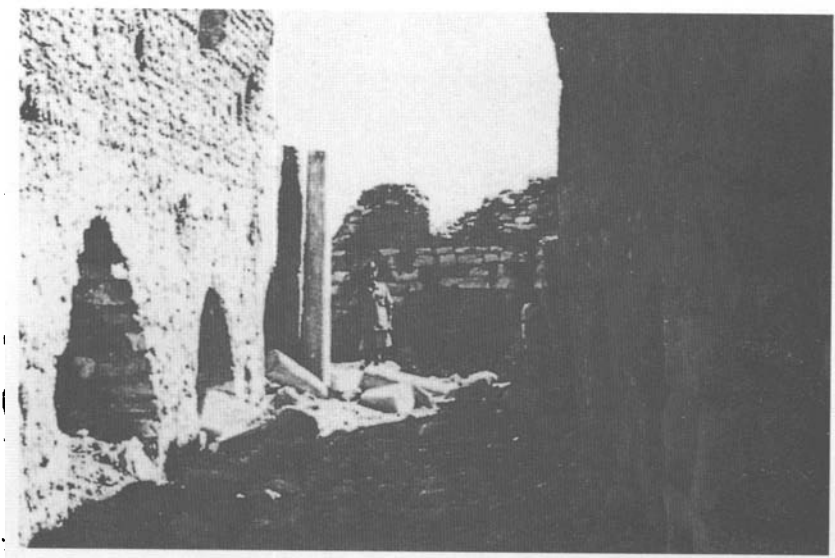


Plate 34 The church at Adendan: the interior. [ch. 9]
(Photo: P. L. Shinnie.)



Plate 35 The church at Mograka. [ch. 9]
(Photo: P. L. Shinnie.)



Plate 36 St Anna (first half of eighth century AD). [ch. 9]
(Photo courtesy The John Hillelson Agency Ltd, London.)



Plate 37 Queen Mother Martha, protected by the hand of the Virgin Mary (end of eleventh century; detail). [ch. 9]
(Photo courtesy the John Hillelson Agency Ltd.)



Plate 38 Nativity scene (late tenth–early eleventh century). [ch. 9]
(Photo courtesy the John Hillelson Agency Ltd.)